Enrico pricked up his ears. " 'Rico – ride," he said, "on beeg . . horse."

"I tell you what we will do," Luella said. "We will go after breakfast to the stables where we will look at the big horses, but I think you will have to grow much larger before you can ride them."

Enrico was so excited that he chatted away in Italian because it was easier for him. He explained that he wanted to ride big horses so that he could jump very big hedges. Because he seemed so happy, Luella let him talk in his own language.

When breakfast was finished, they went to the stables. It was a warm day and there was no need for coats, nor, as far as Luella was concerned, a hat. The sun shone on her golden hair. Because she was so unselfconscious she had no idea that the grooms and stable lads watched her admiringly. They paraded some of the horses in the yard so that she and Enrico could see them better.

Then to Enrico's delight, the head groom lifted him up onto the back of one of the horses. " 'Rico riding!" he shouted. " 'Rico riding on verry beeg horse!"

As his voice echoed round the stables the Duke came into the yard. He was riding a magnificent black stallion. Luella felt embarrassed. She was afraid the Duke might think they had presumed on their precarious position as his guests in going to the stables.

To her relief, however, when he dismounted he walked up to her and said: "I imagine that, as you have been all over the world with your father, you can ride?"

Luella laughed. "Anything!" she claimed. "From a reluctant mule to a yak."

"I could provide you with something better than that," the Duke said, "but I have decided that we must leave for London this afternoon after an early luncheon."

"Y.yes . . of course," Luella said in a low voice. She suddenly thought how wrong it was for her and Enrico to be enjoying themselves. They were laughing while the Duke was beset with the danger of a scandal.

Enrico, protesting, was lifted off the horse. Luella, leading him by the hand, started to walk back to the Castle.

" 'Rico wanna . . ride . . rida beeg . . horse!" he insisted.

"Perhaps you will be able to do that another day," Luella said. "We are going to drive behind some very big horses this afternoon."

" 'Rico ride!" he said firmly.

It was easier not to argue.

When they went into the Castle the Duke said to the butler: "Tell Mrs Moore to have Miss Hanley's luggage ready so that we can leave at one o'clock."

"Very good, Your Grace," Bates replied.

They went into a room on the ground floor which overlooked the garden. Like every other room Luella had been in, there was fine furniture and pictures by Old Masters on the walls. She thought wistfully that she would never have time to see them, nor to explore the Castle, as she longed to do. She was just about to ask if there was time to see the library before luncheon, when Bates announced: